INTRODUCTION

Civilization, in spite of its blessings, is the enemy of most of the things that make up our cultural inheritance. With education comes sophistication, which rarely sees any value in customs that differ from standardized forms, which sells the old furniture and buys the new, which doubts the value of anything that has attained to a great age. Such rapid changes are taking place that a middle-aged man of our time finds it difficult to recreate the conditions of his childhood. The student of folk-lore, like the lover of antique furniture, sees a value in customs that are passing and tries to rescue them from oblivion. He has no desire to oppose inevitable change; he hopes, rather, to record what men have thought and done, so that students of other times may be able to visualize a little more accurately the conditions under which their ancestors lived.

Kentucky is rich in folk-lore. Because of the late development of our educational system and our still more backward transportation, we still have in many parts of the state almost primitive conditions. It is a challenge to the student of folk-lore to study vanishing manners and habits before they have utterly disappeared.

The pioneers came to Kentucky almost in a body. Within the lifetime of the earliest settlers the state grew from a few forts in the wilderness to a populous commonwealth occupying all of its present area. It was less than fifty years between the settlement of Harrodstown and Boonesborough and the complete occupancy of the Jackson Purchase, the "last West" of Kentucky. Most of the settlers were English, Scotch, and Scotch-Irish, but there were a few Germans from Pennsylvania and Huguenots from the Carolinas. There is, then, a fairly close relationship between the folk customs of any two sections of the state. While numerous bodies of immigrants have settled in Kentucky since pioneer times, few of these have left any very noticeable influence, except in the coal-mining areas in the mountains and in the cities along the Ohio River. The early settlers and their descendants have always been dominant in determining the customs peculiar to our state.

Our folk-lore is largely that of the time of Queen Elizabeth, when the

earliest settlements were being planned and when the Lowland Scotch were emigrating in large numbers to northern Ireland, taking with them their age-old customs and traditions. Potato famines and the lure of free land drove thousands of the Scotch-Irish to America. In language and traditions they were quite similar to the English of the tidewater areas of Virginia and the Carolinas. Conservative of their customs, language, and traditions, as all emigrants are, especially in places remote from the main lines of travel, these early settlers and their descendants have preserved almost intact what has elsewhere been wholly or partially lost.

For a long time Kentucky was the half-way house between the older settlements and the new. Before roads and railroads were built across Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, Kentucky, with its Wilderness Road and Ohio River, was the point of departure for the unsettled regions to the north, south, and west. Some of the pioneers on their way to the newer regions got only so far as Kentucky; others returned after a stay on the borders. In these ways we have received all sorts of stories, songs, and customs that owe their origin to regions far away, to supplement those brought by the first settlers.

From time to time I shall discuss briefly in this column various phases of Kentucky folk-lore: songs and ballads, superstitions, folk customs, folk industries, language, and passing institutions. Various members of the Kentucky Folk-lore Society, who have done original investigations in these fields, will aid me in the preparation of such articles as are concerned with their individual researches. It is hoped that these brief sketches and essays will awaken Kentuckians to the value of our folk backgrounds and will promote further investigations by professional and amateur alike.

BREAKDOWNS

Breakdowns are of two kinds: those which are sung and played on some musical instrument and those which are played only. It is hard to tell which first came into use, but I am inclined to believe, from a study of the popular ballads of many countries, that the sung breakdown is the older, a species of popular ballad. In a few instances I have heard breakdowns that told stories in true ballad fashion and were used for the "words" in a "play party". Most sung breakdowns do not tell a connected story; if they ever did, the story has become so garbled that it is now impossible for us to follow the plan or plot. Sometimes there are three or four stanzas in succession that relate to similar things and suggest a sort of connected story. In many sections of the state "The Girl I Left Behind Me" has become a play-party song, chiefly devoted to directions for the dance. In other places it is purely an instrumental number.

By far the greater number of the sung breakdowns are of the disconnected type. Many of them seem to record nearly every reaction of the community, and there will appear in the same ballad, or at least there will be sung to the same tune, stanzas ranging from the most ridiculous to the most serious, from emotions that are cultured to those that are most barbaric. The old breakdown ballad recently revived and made a song hit, "'Tain't Gwine Rain No More," illustrates this tendency of breakdown ballads to sing of everything, good and bad, respectable and shady. As a child I heard it, every hearing adding some new element from an adjoining neighborhood or some improvised stanza. Since the song has been revived, the same thing is true of it: everybody who sings it is tempted to add a stanza or two. Some of those are too obscene or inane to keep, but many are in accord with the original, so far as a popular ballad of any kind can be said to have an original. If one could live for a few centuries, I wonder how many times "'Tain't Gwine to Rain," like Sir Roger de Coverley's coat, would be in or out of style.

One can hardly think of a breakdown ballad without its gags. Demijohns and jugs often figure in them, though in a very conventional way. Mothers-in-law,

that great source of jokes, come in for their share of notice. The ballad-poet seems to have been quite a gallant in his day, to judge by his frequent references to "purty little girls," twinkling eyes, and similar things. Women are very often the victims of gags in the breakdowns, especially because of their ability to talk and to spread news. The sung breakdown is a sort of clearing-house for the poetry of the people, giving them a chance to take a satiric fling in conventional verse at what seems laughable in our common humanity.

Sung breakdowns are, after all, not the most typical ones. The singing of the words might interfere too much with the calling of the figures of the dance, and, besides, it takes too much breath to dance and sing at the same time, provided one wants to

"Dance all night till the broad daylight;
Go home with the gals in the morning."

As "Turkey in the Straw" is the prince of sung breakdowns, so "Arkansaw Traveller" is the prince of instrumental ones. It is hard to think of "Arkansaw Traveller" without a fiddle, just as "Turkey in the Straw" suggests the banjo, or banjo and fiddle. The instrumental breakdowns are numerous, but my own favorites are the following: "Soldier's Joy," "Arkansaw Traveller," "Pop Goes the Weasel," and "Little Black Dog with a Green Toe-Nail." In true folk fashion nearly every neighborhood has its own variation in the air of these breakdowns. Every fiddler or banjo-picker adds the stamp of his own personality. That is as it should be, for whatever is of the folk belongs to every individual of the race.

PLAY-PARTY GAMES

Along with numerous other things once well-known everywhere, such as log-rollings, house-raisings, husking-bees, and quilting-parties, have passed the singing-games, or, as they were often called, "play-party games." Only rarely now, in some secluded section of the hills or mountains, or some other place still unaffected by sophistication, can one find remnants of this type of folk-lore. And even more rarely still, can a stranger, especially if he is from the city, get a glimpse of these plays as they were actually given by young and old.

Believing that young people would appreciate the old singing-games given under proper direction and beyond the range of their previous bad name, some years ago I revived many of those traditional games and directed them on our college campus during the summer terms. The response from the young people was in every way fine; many have helped reintroduce games from their own neighborhoods, with all the local touches that make anything of the folk pleasing. I began with about a dozen couples, to whom I taught the steps; they in turn became assistant directors of the games, in which dozens and even hundreds often participated in a single late afternoon. Those who took part in these time-honored games went into their own neighborhoods and reintroduced them. One of my students conducted a play-and-game period in his home town for five years as a result of his interest in these forms of entertainment. I have been delighted within the last few years to find that several of the mountain schools, with a desire to keep good things found in our state, have revived these games and have made them a part, along with ballad-singing, of their regular school activities.

Unlike ballads, singing-games are not interested in telling a story. Not infrequently the words are mere directions, versified. Many of the singing-games imply a singing group and a dancing group. However, some of the most effective ones have the singing and dancing done by the same people, who, of course, must have plenty of breath. The words have a marked rhythm, which is usually based on four or eight counts. Usually a series of evolutions is given three times,

after which another is introduced, and so on. The steps are very simple, usually a walk or a skip, with very marked rhythm. The rhythm is further intensified by hand-clapping by players or those standing in a ring awaiting their turn to dance. Sometimes there are two or more types of rhythm in a single game: one when the partner is being chosen or the whole group are marching or skipping, the other when the individual couples are performing their steps.

Though the "Virginia Reel" is a singing-game in parts of the state, in most places it is a sort of cross between the square dance and the singing-game, with a prompter to call the "figgers." Typical singing-games, known by different names in other parts of the state, are "Style of Army," "Lowly," "Skip to My Lou," "Pig in the Parlor," "Chase (or Shoot) the Buffalo," and "Susie in the Ring." A collection of the singing-games found in Kentucky, together with full directions and the endless local improvisations, would fill a large book. Some person seeking to do something distinctive could make a reputation by collecting and preserving for the future those delightful old games.

KENTUCKY BALLADS AND SONGS

Kentuckians have always been a singing people. A legend says that one of the companions of Daniel Boone, who became separated from him on a hunt, grew frightened at a strange noise in the forest. He looked to his priming and crept cautiously in the direction of the sound. Finally, when the hunter's nerves were frayed with uncertainty at the volume and harshness of the sound, he discovered that Boone was singing as he lay on his back on the leaves, either because of a wave of loneliness or because of a sense of joy in life.

Ballad-singing was one of the customs brought directly from the British Isles by the pioneers. Many of the old English and Scottish popular ballads have been discovered in Kentucky by Professor John F. Smith, of Berea College; Mr. H. H. Fuson, of Harlan; the musician Howard Brockway, of New York; and the late Miss Josephine McGill, of Louisville, to mention only a few of those who have found ballad-hunting fascinating. Most of this work, however, has been done in the mountains. The great central areas of the state and the Jackson Purchase are still practically untouched and would yield equally excellent material. In many remote communities there are still left some of the old-time ballads singers, unknown to talking machine companies and radio broadcasting systems.

Quite as interesting as the old English and Scottish popular ballads are the native ballads that Kentucky has produced or else has kept alive. The ballad-making impulse had weakened greatly before Kentucky was settled, but that it is still alive was shown by the numerous songs that grew up around the Floyd Collins disaster. Though these native ballads are the product of definite authors, they have usually been transmitted orally and have taken on the characteristics of the older ballads. From neighborhood to neighborhood they have passed, sometimes acquiring accretions in the transmission. Hundreds of songs that tell a story and do not belong under the head of old ballads still exist. Occasionally one of them, like the "Prisoner's Song," is picked up and given a new life by some musician. The talking machine and the radio have been the means of reviving or recording

some of those ballads, but the number thus rescued is probably smaller than that of ballads yet to be found and recorded.

Ballads are concerned primarily with telling a story; songs are lyrical rather than narrative. Many mountain songs have found their way into collections and published articles, but again the state as a whole has not been explored. Professors Odum and Johnson, of the University of North Carolina, have shown, by their survey of only two counties in the South, that Negro songs are largely uncollected. Our Kentucky Negro songs have been studied by Professor Karl J. Holtzknecht, while he was a member of the University of Louisville faculty, and Miss Mary Allan Grissom, of Columbia. Some of the teachers in the colored schools of Louisville have rescued from their students little-known or unknown songs. There are probably hosts of Negro songs peculiar to the Ohio River towns and to such areas as the Western Coalfields and the cotton patches around Hickman.

Though Negro songs are relatively more numerous than any other kind, there are many songs in the state sung by the whites that have never been printed in any form. The Jackson Purchase, judging by the songs there when I was a boy, ought to yield many cowboy songs and ballads; more than fifteen of those given in Dr. John A. Lomax's COWBOY SONGS AND BALLADS were sung in my neighborhood. Nearly all of the rhymes and songs found in Newell's PLAYS AND GAMES OF AMERICAN CHILDREN have appeared in Kentucky in some form. Some have found a place in songbooks, but others are circulating orally, in true folk-song fashion. All of these should be recorded in some accepted fashion.

FIDDLES AND VIOLINS

The fiddle is not a violin, whatever their superficial resemblances. In the first place, the violin is a high-brow instrument, one on which you take lessons under some famous musician at two dollars a lesson and on which you learn to play "Souvenir," and "Melody in F," and Mendelssohn's "Spring Song." A fiddle is a folk instrument on which one plays by ear the traditional numbers that cannot and should not be written down in musical notation. The violin knows how to wail, to dream, to lose itself in reverie; the fiddle knows how to set the feet a-patting, the hand a-clapping, the heart a-dancing for joy. The violin is often played by an aesthetic, bloodless young man who is "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought" and whose long locks overshadow a broad expanse of forehead, the badge of intellectuality. The fiddler is husky, red-faced, jolly, with locks that are long only because it has not yet come time for his annual spring hairout. The violin is often pedigreed like a Kentucky horse; the fiddle needs no pedigree; it is abundantly able to take care of itself.

But sentiment aside, the fiddle is not played as is a violin. The fiddle is tuned E, A, D, A. The primitive scale of music is the one most used, by far the most-frequently recurring notes being do, mi, so, do, as in the Negro spiritual. Triplets are common: they seem to quicken the feet. The fiddle must be around if there is to be a breakdown; a guitar, or box, will help it if necessary.

Not only is a violin pedigreed, but it also adds caste to its owner. Just to say he is a violinist adds a kind of halo even to the most commonplace boy. To call him a fiddler blasts his lineage up and down, according to some of the people I have met. A violin is a symbol of culture; the fiddle is a

symbol of worldliness and almost of sinfulness. Many a man of my elder acquaintance laid away his fiddle when he joined a church and often testified in meeting to the sinful desires he sometimes had to get the old instrument out and strike up a "chune." One old fellow, testifying in a meeting, remarked that the preacher used to be a great fiddler and fiddled for him to dance; "Now," said he, poetically and prophetically, "he is fiddling again and I am dancing."

The violinist, if he becomes great enough, gets his portrait painted and ultimately appears on sheet music; the fiddler in the older times got his tintype "took," but it appears only in the old family albums that used to grace the marble-top center tables. And thus a slightly different tuning plus a different kind of sawing the bow makes all the difference in this chameleon-like world, where, as Longfellow would say, "Things are not what they seem." At the risk of being regarded as plebeian, however, let me utter one note of praise for the ruddy old fiddler, even at the expense of the aesthetic, wistful-eyed, lion-maned violinist.

WILD GREENS

Sir Roger de Coverley, in one of my favorite sketches in all literature, said that his method of dressing, which had not changed since his being jilted by the widow, had been in and out of style twelve times. If one could live a few hundred years, he might find that styles in things to eat play just such pranks. Years ago it was supposed to be plebeian to eat greens, or sallet; to mention such a dish in polite society was thought to smack of ill breeding. The clock has gone round a few hours, and now greens, whether tame or wild, are just the thing. They contain vitaminos, we are told, very necessary items in the daily food of any well-regulated home. The most fashionable private residences and the ultra-fashionable restaurants exhale an odor of cooking greens. My taste, always ploboian so far as food is concerned, rejoices now at the exaltation of greens and the recrudescence--to use a big word--of my old friend potlicker.

But even in the days when turnip greens or mustard or other greens were under the ban there was another near relative that suffered more from supercilious judges of good things to eat. I refer to wild greens or sallet. Somehow the springs seem truncated or otherwise choppy now, for I fail to see or hear of wild greens. It was otherwise in the consulship of Grover Cleveland, for my Scotch-Irish father celebrated the passing of dour winter by a feast of wild greens. No anoient Druid was more punctilious in his celebration of the return of winter than was my father in his annual spring festival. Bucket and knife in hand, I wandered along protecting fence-rows and cut the juicy young plants, a veritable herbarium. Poke and narrow-leaved dock formed the basis of this collection. Local tradition said that wide-leaved dock was poisonous, but I delighted in breaking local traditions, even in a matter quite so settled as wild sallet. After a mess of wild greens, chiefly of the wide-leaved dock, no fatalities resulted; thereafter, much to my delight, for the wide-leaved species was far more plentiful than the other kinds, the taboo on this plant was lifted. Lamb's quarters, all too plentiful in gardens and around piles of manure, was another plant allowed, but the directions handed down by my parents said that the proportions of this plant to the entire mass

must be small. Then there was speckled jack, whatever that is, and wild lettuce, and even young, tender blackberry briars. Some others I know there were, but I have forgotten them; anyway, we eked out what I had cut with mustard from the tobacco plantbeds and even radish tops, if such were to be had.

Properly cooked, with hog's jowl or side-bacon, this collection of wild plants furnished a dish worthy to be included in the list of Olympian goods. It is said on good authority that my great-grandsire once remarked that if the King of England should come as a visitor and find wild greens, cornbread, and hog's jowl the only things served for supper, he could eat those things or go hungry. I have often wondered what the King would have done or said on this embarrassing occasion, especially since this same ruler was the redoubtable George III. My liking for wild greens, then, is, like so many other things, hereditary. And after years of respectful silence in the presence of those who set the style in eating I can now speak out and praise the merits of greens in general and wild greens in particular.

FOLK PREJUDICES

The spectacle of anti-Semitic propaganda in Germany is rather hard for us to understand until we recall our own racial hatreds. How long it has taken the English and Irish to learn how to live together! How hard it is for Germanic and Latin races to agree for any length of time! To us on the other side of the Atlantic it seems foolish for two such near neighbors as the French and Germans to be hostile to each other. What we forget is that the racial prejudices of these two peoples in all probability are based on intangible things that are older than history. The very force that in far-away times caused the two language groups represented now by the French and the German to separate may be the basis for the modern inability of the two to understand each other. The French in Canada have known no other ruler but the King of England since 1763, but we witnessed the strange spectacle during the World War of riots on the part of French Canadians to resist conscription, even though France itself was the ally of the still-hated Great Britain.

Though we parade a little too obviously our American tolerance of every race and sect, racial prejudices are by no means dead. People with a mixed ancestry often find it difficult to know when to take sides. The bitterness of our own Civil War was engendered ages before a single slave was sold in Virginia; something of the passions set in motion by the Reformation had survived and still survives, even in the breasts of those who would like to forget. Kentuckians are especially puzzled in their prejudices. With relatives on both sides, with the state still in the Union and yet to all intents and purposes out of it, with first one army and then the other surging across our borders and making it hard for anybody with normal feelings to be neutral or even mildly partisan, our immediate

ancestors must have suffered in a way that people farther north or farther south could not understand. Even today the Civil War flames up in my classes, a spectacle that makes one wonder how long we must live to be able to forget.

Our later emigrants, though untouched by our Civil War prejudices, have a contempt, often, for those who have arrived in America still later than they. One of my students, with an unpronounceable name, spoke very slightingly of the newcomers in Chicago, even though his own Czech grandfather, who is still living, had come over as a common emigrant only fifty years ago. Somehow we sometimes hand on our own prejudices to those who have come to share America with us. Alexander Wilson, the Scotch weaver who came to America in 1794 and later became our greatest ornithologist, had become so Americanized, even in prospect, that he identified himself on the sailing vessel that brought him to Philadelphia with a wild-eyed advocate of democracy and wrote proudly back to Scotland as an American of long standing. One is reminded of the Irishman who landed in America the second of July, got on the New York police force the next day, met his brother at Ellis Island the next, and, when asked the reason for the fireworks, replied proudly: "This is the day we whipped youse." Prejudices, whether native or acquired, are unreasoning and inexplicable; we do not know enough about the early history of the race to explain them.

PASSING INSTITUTIONS

CHIPS

Coal has about routed wood as a fuel; this makes it possible that many people in this generation do not know much about chips. But we who are fossilized remains of remote geological ages recall with pleasurable emotions all sorts of things connected with chips.

First of all, chips were used for kindling. Since much of the wood was hauled to the woodpile in "three-stick" lengths, the actual chopping took place at the woodpile itself rather than in the woods. Consequently, there were chips. The larger ones were picked up by the younger members of the family and stored away for winter use as kindling or to help start the fire around the wash-kettle at all seasons. The larger boys carried in wood; it was the prerogative of those larger boys to domineer over boys who were just big enough to pick up chips. I never knew a big boy who failed in his duty. Chips were such a necessary commodity around the house that they gave rise to a proverbial comparison: "As handy as a basket of chips."

Along about the time that bacon was hung up there came another use for chips. On the ground in the smokehouse, if there were no floor, or in an old kettle or stove the chips were burned, green ones being most desired, as they produced the most smoke. It was great fun to roast dried beef over the chip fire or to throw into the fire a handful of the waste salt left from the meat being cured. Meanwhile we were hardly able to see because of the thick smoke. Tears and dried beef mingled as we dutifully attended to the fires that cured the meat and thus became, as it were, an annual incense to the gods of plenty and fore-thought.

After all the large chips had been picked up, there yet remained hosts of smaller ones and tiny slivers and pieces of bark. This residue had its peculiar use, however, when mosquitoes and flies became common. We raked up small piles of these remnants and made smudge fires to drive away these pests from the cows

at milking time. No odor has ever been quite so fragrant, either in the nostrils or in the memory, as the smoke from a smudge fire built at the woodpile.

Not all chips were burned; some remained on the ground and gradually returned to earth, making a rich, loose dirt that found many uses. Sometimes we dug up some of it for the earliest plantings in the garden, to hasten along the peas and beets and radishes and to help dry out the soil. Regularly we filled our flower pots with this dirt. It was inclined to be drouthy but very fertile. However, we doused the flowers weekly with the water left from washday and managed to keep the flowers growing. Chip dirt also attracted fishing worms. To the woodpile we went in search of bait when the first warm days invited us to the creek to try our luck. Tin cans and quinine bottles were always easy to fill with worms from the woodpile. And what place could produce such rank jimpson weeds and thorny careless and dog fennel? And what finer place for the hens to dust themselves all through the summer than the dirt we had disturbed in digging bait? The very soul of the old-fashioned farm, as I now remember it, seemed to have permeated the woodpile and its chips.

PASSING INSTITUTIONS

GOURDS

While a group of us were going along a country road to a camping place a few summers ago, the truck in which our equipment was being hauled needed some water. The driver stopped at a way-side spring and returned with a large gourd full of water. At once we followed him back to the spring, and each one, regardless of the germ theory of disease, took a deep draught from the gourd. And then we talked about gourds all the rest of the way, and while we cooked our supper over the open fire, and even after we had set up our tents and lain down for the night. By pooling our memories, we made out enough uses for gourds to justify their being ranked as one of the leading crops of Kentucky. Of course, all the younger readers of this column will wonder why such tender memories could cling to an object so crude and elemental as a gourd, but some others, not so young any longer, will understand.

The gourd used as a dipper will be a good enough place to start. Much as the tin dipper is now used, and much as the health authorities would like to give it up, there was a time when even the much-battered and abused tin dipper did not exist. Unless you wished to kneel down and take your drink, you had to dip it up in a gourd grown and cut for that very purpose. The bitter of the gourd gave a tang to the water that we never get now, better than the taste of chloride of lime by far and probably as deadly to germs, if any really existed in those days when we were younger and the constellations were nearer. A gourd dipper just fits a spring or a well but not a tap. If water must be drawn up from a well for a gourd to dip into it, let it be drawn in a wooden bucket like the one in Woodworth's famous song. If you can think of incongruities, imagine a sign in a railroad car reading thus: "Common drinking gourd prohibited by law."

Not all gourds have a dipper-like bowl and a long handle. Gourds grow in all sorts of interesting shapes. There are the dancing gourds beloved of our boyhood. And there are nest-egg gourds, formerly regarded as the very thing on the

farm. I do not know whether they are stylish in the henhouse now. Probably they have been replaced by these glass contraptions that we used to see displayed by the wash-tubful in front of every store. And gourds, hard and dry, form excellent containers for all sorts of kitchen things. One such gourd, flat like a pumpkin and holding two gallons or more, used to be the egg-container in a farm house I knew. This old gourd had come all the way from North Carolina on a prairie schooner and had served all these years in this useful way. Other gourds were used to dip up home-made soap and others to contain salt and sugar and garden seeds. "The calabash," says an authority of seventy-five years ago, "is the sine qua non of a South Sea Islander's household equipment." In a very similar way the humble gourd served its time, until routed by corn-theories and a desire for cleanliness. Kitchen cabinets are well enough to hold food, but gourds were necessary when everybody ate victuals and thrived, too.

PASSING INSTITUTIONS

TREATS

Some institutions that have gone have left adequate successors, but no successor has yet been found for the old-time treat. Boys and girls of our time, who are used to having apples, oranges, and candy whenever they wish, can never know the rare and wonderful joy we experienced when the last day of school came and the teacher gave a treat. There were a few indications, even in those days, that the institution was passing, for some teachers in districts adjoining ours were said to be failing in their duty toward their pupils. We of our school frankly suggested that such teachers should not be allowed to keep school any longer.

No matter how bad the weather, every child appeared on the last day of school and was fully able to eat, though he may have been kept at home for a week or two previously on account of illness. Sometimes the parents and younger brothers or sisters also appeared on the last day. Usually there was a sort of closing exercise, such as the saying of pieces, but nobody paid any attention to pieces, for the whole school was consumed with hunger. While some of the Friday-afternoon classics were being given, the teacher gave a knowing wink at two of the larger boys, who forthwith disappeared out the door, while children and visitors craned their necks after them and left the poor little boy who was saying his piece to get through the best way he could. By the time the last piece was said, the boys returned with a candy bucket or a box or a sack or two. Wiggling youngsters could hardly wait until the packages were unwrapped. As I remember it now, there were three time-honored things in a treat: stick candy, candy in small bits, and apples. Not all appeared at any one time, but one or two of these had to be present to keep up the tradition. The candy was passed around by two boys, who had previously been instructed how many sticks or pieces each pupil might have. Peppermint was the commonest flavor of the stick candy. The small bits were of many varieties: gumdrops, mint hearts with sayings and verses stamped in red on them, peppermint chunks, caramels, and kisses wrapped up in oiled paper and containing a verse on a small

slip of paper. Candy kisses deserve a whole essay or even a volume, for they were remembered long after the treat was eaten up. The apples were small and knotty, judged by present standards, but no ambrosial food served on Mount Olympus to grace a gathering of Greek gods ever tasted as they did to us. My, how those gumdrops stuck to a fellow's teeth! And how rapidly the apples were eaten to the core! And how easily the candy was crunched! And how I wanted to murder the rowdy boys who took more than their share of the treat! The happiest faces present were those of the small children who were not old enough to come to school. No doubt many of those youngsters right then and there resolved on a life of learning if its course were to be punctuated with treats like this.

After the treat had been served, and while belated ones were munching their apple cores, it was the conventional thing for the teacher to make a brief speech of goodbye, telling how much she had enjoyed the term and how good the children had been. We pupils, still smacking our mouths over the treat and also still as starved as when we came to school, believed every word and forgot the whippings and staying in and standing up, which had all been so poignant the day or even the hour before. However, though we shed a few furtive tears when the teacher's voice trembled, that did not keep us from yelling like Indians the minute the school was over, for we all pretended that we were glad the term was over.

Since those days I have tasted all sorts of candy: home-made, store-bought, and other sorts, but nothing has ever had the flavor of stick candy, and kisses, and gumdrops. Other candy melts in your mouth; good old gumdrops, or "tooth-pullers," had a way of staying put for a long time. And I have eaten bushels of Grimes' Golden and Stark's Delicious apples, but apples of all sorts are tasteless beside those knotty little ones we used to get on the last day of school.

PASSING INSTITUTIONS

THE OLD FAMILY NAG

I

Before the automobile has entirely routed the horse, and before the generation who knew the horse intimately has passed away, it would be well for us to pause long enough in our pursuit of elusive happiness to pay our belated respects to the old family nag. We are so constituted that we cannot see the poetry and romance of anything until it has ceased to be common and is already becoming for some people only a memory. The old family nag is one of the things bequeathed to us by our ancestors which we are not likely to pass on to our descendants. Unless the old nag lives on in poetry and romance, she is likely to become one of the lost institutions, or else a faint memory of former days.

On the old-time farm there was a vital need for the old family nag. The other horses were busily employed in the fields. Besides, the women and children needed some gentle animal to drive or ride to the country store, or to the postoffice, or to the homes of friends and neighbors. Then there were the colts to be mothered, and the old nag could not be expected to work very hard on the farm while she was raising a family. By degrees, then, the institution grew up and ultimately became as much a part of the well-ordered farm as the division of labor or the crops or the hired hands.

Generally the old family nag was a mare, and we shall so designate her in this paper and the following two. Though by no means decrepit with age, she was always called "Old Mag," or "Old Maud," or "Old Nell." It was her duty to initiate all the boys of the family into the thrilling sport of horseback riding. Gentle, motherly, she bore her childish burdens with a full realization of their importance. Even though in their awkwardness the boys often fell off her friendly back, she tried to make amends for a fault she could not help by stopping until

the frightened boy could regain his bravery and mount again to his perilous seat.

An adjunct to the old family nag was the old family buggy; I can hardly think of one without calling the other to mind. It was not the well-groomed, narrow-seated buggy which the young gallants drove, the buggy which acquired the title of H. M. T. (Hug-me-tight) because of its meager room. No, when the old nag was hitched to a vehicle, it was a buggy made to accommodate the family, or at least as great a part of the old-fashioned family as could be served even by such a vehicle. Spacious of seat, spacious of bed, blessed with plenty of room fore and aft, it was usually called upon to offer all its space to the traveling family. The seat had room enough for Father and Mother, with one of the youngsters tucked snugly between them, only his foot being visible. Another youngster, slightly larger, sat on the floor of the buggy, his foot extending under the seat. And frequently there was another child, a good-sized boy, standing up behind the seat, if the distance to be traveled were not too long. With this load the old family nag went on her way, not rapidly, for that was not her custom, but also hampered by the weight of her cargo. Or, probably, she was less burdened, if some of the older boys had become too large to ride in the old buggy and were, like so many outriders of a prince, forming a cordon at the head and the end of the procession, riding the grown and near-grown colts of the old family nag, while Father and Mother, a little the worse for wear, rode alone in the roomy old buggy.

PASSING INSTITUTIONS

THE OLD FAMILY NAG

PART II

I have stood on the steps of the old country church and watched the family cavalcades arrive on Sunday morning, the old family nag and the family buggy holding the place of honor in each group. One of the larger boys got off his steed, and, after tethering it to a sapling, aided Father in unhitching Old Maud from the buggy. Meanwhile the rest of the family had alighted from the buggy, the indispensable satchel containing teacakes to keep the smaller children quiet during "preaching" always in evidence. Mother and the children filed into the church, while Father and the boys joined the group of farmers seated at the roots of the big sugar maple tree in front of the church. Soon the whole crowd would go into the church and start services. Old Maud and the colt are forever getting lost from each other and indulging in every variety of nickering and chuckling. A neighbor's mule joins its voice to the commotion, giving vent to a sound that has always seemed to me a longing for human utterance. The meeting over, the reluctant throng breaks up, and the process of arriving at church is reversed: Mother and the younger children climb in, while Father and Big Brother round up the colt and hitch Old Maud to the buggy. If it is the season for the Quarterly Meeting, the family remain for dinner on the ground. Old Maud is fed at her hitching place, Father and one of the neighbors meanwhile discussing the tariff, or original sin, or the prospects for a good crop of wheat, or corn, or sorghum. Somehow, there has never been the same meaning to prayer in my grown-up days that those prayers in the back-country had, when Old Maud and the colt and the neighbor's mule punctuated the petitions of the local preacher with their voicings of inexpressible longings.

It was Old Maud that we rode when we went to the country store for the

weekly laying-in of sugar and coffee. And we got the mail, and indulged in a luxury or two, as some peppermint candy, or a stick of licorice, or some wax (chewing gum). On the way home we read the week-old news and felt the thrill of the big outside world. Old Maud "mosied" along, with her head low, her thoughts on the pastures she had known or the famous stands she had mothered. Sometimes, just to show that she had not entirely forgotten her former mettle, she became frightened at some object of her dreams and left us lying on the sand, the incidents of the marvelous stories we were reading and those of the painful present badly scrambled. But she did not really mean to throw us and looked quite penitent, especially if we used the big words we had heard the older boys use when the unexpected happened. A few rubs on the skinned elbow, a taste of the licorice or the peppermint candy, and a resuming of our reading of the crumpled paper set all to rights, and we were ourselves once more.

When we got a half holiday on Saturday afternoon, it was Old Maud that bore us and our crude fishing-tackle to the creek, where the long, hot afternoon passed as a dream, when every bite portended the catching of that big fish that is in every pool. And Old Maud stood hitched to a sycamore and snorted at the scent of the scaly, bony little sunfish and hornyheads that we threw excitedly out on the bank. And on the way home she pranced as if our catch, dangling from a twig, were in truth sharks or whales.

PASSING INSTITUTIONS

THE OLD FAMILY NAG

PART III

Every boy's training on the farm included the breaking of colts. Proud has always been the man who could point to some scar as an evidence of his having been kicked or thrown by some wild young colt he was breaking. It seems a bit queer that colts were so wild when Old Maud, the mother of so many, was always so tame. I wonder whether we have not overdrawn the trials we experienced while breaking these colts to be the civilized animals they usually proved to be.

By and by comes the time when a young fellow is large enough to have dim, unformed longings to "buggy-ride" the girls. After long trials, many of which go awry before they are put into execution, a fellow succeeds in making an engagement with his heart's desire. Since he cannot yet afford a buggy of his own, and since Big Brother will not trust him with his H. M. T. and high-mettled traveler, nothing remains but Old Maud and Father's roomy family buggy. And yet, from very personal memories, the capacious old vehicle seemed a bit crowded when the two new buggy-riders took their seats. And, an unforgivable thing, Father often insists on your letting the colt follow. Still, getting out of the buggy to chase the colt, which persists in getting lost or getting in the way so you cannot show how fast Old Maud can travel, gives some relief to your pent-up embarrassment. I wonder what Old Maud thought of our awkwardness and whether she did not indulge in a horse-laugh in the silence of her stall. For instance, how did she escape laughter when I awkwardly tried to "jump out" of the buggy a young lady, in the approved way in which young men jumped out young ladies. I must confess that the temperature of the day goes up slightly when I remember this event, even now, after so long a time.

In every home there was a sentiment that opposed any mistreatment of Old Maud after she had passed beyond the days of her usefulness. For years she lived on, tenderly cared for as if she were a real member of the family. Other horses came and went, but it was regarded as sacrilegious to sell or dispose of one who had been so faithful. I have seen old family nags so helpless that they had to be lifted to their feet every morning and fed specially prepared food. And next to a death in the family proper was the passing of the faithful old animal. Without an effort to conceal their feelings, the household heard the news broken-hearted. Old Maud had gone, the Old Maud who as a colt had been the care of Father, or Uncle Ben, or Big Brother; who had been broken to the buggy and the saddle by these same boys; who had carried the family burdens to the mill or the country store; who had drawn the family in state to the country church or the graveyard; who had handed down to her numerous progeny the characteristics of her good, useful old life; who had given the boy his start toward matrimony; who had unconsciously become an integral part of the family circle; who had lived beyond the years of her usefulness but had never met any complaints about consuming food and rendering no service therefor. All her life a blessing, all her life an humble servant to her lord and master, would it be a sacrilege for us to think that she is reserved for a place in the Hereafter where those whom she served may see and know her, even quitting the chanting of hymns and the strumming on harps to climb once more on her ample back or feed her whatever food is most appropriate for sainted horses?

PASSING INSTITUTIONS

PREACHING ALL DAY AND DINNER ON THE GROUND

Hosts of things that are passing leave fragrant memories, but few leave a trail of satisfaction quite like preaching all day and dinner on the ground. This old custom, especially the latter half of it, connects the years of my youth much as the Romans computed time by naming the two reigning consuls. From Quarterly Meeting to Quarterly Meeting was a period of time, quite as definite as any astronomical computation. Quarterly Meetings came in the spring at my church; my birthday came in the fall; between them the year was a glorious memory or a still more glorious anticipation.

Now please do not attach too much importance to the preaching all day. It was necessary as a starter. It furnished the occasion. To come together without some religious purpose would have seemed wicked. After having some excuse for the gathering it was not necessary for people to take the religious side of the matter seriously. In the morning the people assembled and, as if in real fervor, went inside the church, except, of course, a few bad boys, who represented the world, the flesh, and that other fellow. After a deal of lining and singing came the sermon, long, fiery, and loud. Everybody sat as if enthralled, for was not dinner to follow this sermon, however long it might be? Mules brayed in the woods around the church, horses nickered, and in the church the children who were not sufficiently supplied with teacakes cried and longed for dinner. The preacher had to raise his voice to auctioneer proportions to be heard above the noise. Sometimes the sermons were two or three in number; then we could not expect dinner until half past one or even two o'clock.

Be it said frankly, the dinner on the ground was the great thing; the sermons were only sauce to appetite. For days in advance every farmhouse was alive with labor, for people who went to Quarterly Meetings and such like

were always hungry, and it was considered cheap if any one, no matter how far he had come, went away unfilled. Some of the neighbors killed a beef or a mutton, and everybody slaughtered chickens wholesale. Cakes, pies, pickles, light bread,--- but why bring up such a tantalizing array of good things to eat? Whatever doubts the preachers raised as to the fitness of things terrestrial were soon resolved when eating time came.

When the last bite had been swallowed and enough was left to feed another multitude, the crowd dispersed, some actually going home at once, feeling that the real event of the day was over. Others bunched together and discussed everything from original sin to politics. About an hour after dinner there was another "set-to" in the church, but the afternoon program was tame in comparison with the morning session. The preachers were often, quite literally, too full for utterance; the audience were listless and responded very little to harrowing stories of the worm that dieth not. Some time in the late afternoon the crowd broke up, no doubt feeling that religion is a good thing if it brings neighbors and friends together in such gastronomic revelry.

Such events are rapidly disappearing now, thanks to automobiles and better roads. Light bread is no longer a luxury to country people, and butcher shops in every small town make fresh meat much less a rarity than it formerly was. And thus do our cherished institutions pass away, for, as Oliver Wendell Holmes has said, "Grow we must, even if we outgrow all we love."

PASSING INSTITUTIONS

THE CLOCK TINKER

A few years ago, when I was on a visit to my old home, I knew as soon as I stepped in at the front door that something was wrong. It finally dawned on me that the old Seth Thomas clock had been replaced by a modern little clock without weights or striking apparatus. I was told that the old clock had worn its wheels so badly that it would no longer run; I remembered that it was necessary thirty years ago to prop it up on one side to make the wheels catch. I suspect that the old Seth Thomas was just lonesome for an old-fashioned clock tinker. Now back in the early days it would never have acted like this, for Mr. Mullins, the English peripatetic, would have taken out the wheels and weights, oiled and scrubbed them properly, and managed to get them back in running order. Besides, he would have stayed all night or all the week-end and regaled us hungry-eyed and hungry-minded children with tales of his life in England and later in America. I miss his philosophy, too, for he held that one should work seven days in the week and behave himself all the time, a doctrine that savored of atheism in our back-country neighborhood.

Mr. Mullins, or his counterpart elsewhere, was a great institution. The old Seth Thomas clocks somehow sensed the coming of these old wanderers and managed to get out of fix just a day or two before the plodding old clock-tinker-philosopher came along. Gun locks and watches also had sinking spells that only this doctor could cure. A whole neighborhood often needed the services of the tinker for a week or more at a time. And then he would wander away, like Halley's comet, into some strange regions beyond the farthest hills that we know but would come back with a regularity that Halley's comet itself would have been

proud of. More than the clocks and watches and guns he mended were the boys and girls he entertained. He and the pack peddler and the circuit rider just about constituted the outsiders we ever saw, for our teachers were usually the boys and girls of the neighborhood who had taken an examination and were the proud holders of first-class certificates.

Sometimes we boys took a notion that we knew a little about tinkering and proceeded, when Father was away from home, to dissect the old clock. I know of no machinery with so many parts as a Seth Thomas. How anybody ever thought up all those wheels I cannot figure out. When I tried to mend the clock, I put a hundred wheels or so back in place, had a dozen or so left over, and was heart-broken because the thing would not run. Mr. Mullins had an extra day's work when he came along soon after this event, and meanwhile we had to depend for time on the sunshine in the back kitchen door or on the watch that my brother had won by selling (to Father) eighteen packages of Bluine.

But Mr. Mullins and the old Seth Thomas clock have disappeared. We no longer use clocks with weights and few that strike the hours. These new-fangled ones have springs that are always getting out of order and have to be taken to the jeweler, who charges more for his work than the old clock cost. And we no longer lie awake at night and prove our case the next morning by swearing that we heard the clock strike every hour. And we have to listen to the puny tick of those new little clocks and remember with sadness the loud and impressive way the old clocks reminded us of the passing of time. Even clocks and clock tinkers are subject to the tyranny of time, however much aloof from it they may have seemed to be.

FOLK-ETYMOLOGY

Not all the words of the language have found their way into the dictionary. Every neighborhood, every person has words that have been overlooked. Some of these are actual words that have long persisted in the spoken language alone and have not risen into literary use. The chance author who uses them will be credited with introducing a word into the language, when in reality he may be wholly unconscious of having done anything unusual. Without doubt many of the words so credited to individuals in the Oxford Dictionary were unconsciously used by the authors. In addition to old words that survive in our speech, there are others that have been formed ignorantly on words already known. A new word is heard but not seen in writing or print. We come to associate it with something it seems to resemble in sound, especially if our dependence is chiefly on hearing rather than on sight, that is, if we are not book conscious. Nearly every person has kept, consciously or unconsciously, some of his own mispronunciations, words that he tried to say correctly as a child. Many a family holds sacred the baby talk of all its members; baby talk is chiefly a matter of pronunciation of words in terms of fancied resemblance to other known words. Besides, many children have difficulty with certain sounds. And this is not wholly a fault of children. The mayor of my town, Dr. Rutherford, is called by probably half the people of the town Rullerford; another group call him Rellerford. I suspect that most of those who pronounce the word incorrectly are not conscious of their error, just as people in Henry County call Eminence, Emilence. New names often bring humorous pronunciations When Big Deal laundry soap was new, an ignorant boy of my acquaintance in Calloway County called it Dick Beale, probably thinking it named for a well-known Baptist preacher of our county. Through a sense of fun nearly everybody still calls it

Dick Beale soap. One of my students says that a woman in her home neighborhood was delighted with some Gladys Ola bulbs (gladiolus) that she had recently bought. The negroes of my town regularly call a crevice in the rocks a "clevis" and a garage a "gerard." The Gerard family, prominent in our county for several generations, have unconsciously given their name to a shed for an automobile, just as the clevis of the plow has got mixed up with a crevice in a rock. Rather oddly, many of our standard words have had a history similar to these misunderstood words. Words that seemed plural have reappeared in a fancied singular, just as many people make a singular for cheese, "chee," and for hose, "hoe." Not infrequently I have called for cheese at a grocery and have been asked how many I wanted. Mr. M. W. Crawley, for a long time a high-school teacher in the state, once replied to this question: "Show me one (chee), and I will tell you how many I want." It is a well-known fact that the sailors on the vessel that bore Napoleon to St. Helena, the Bellerophon, called it the Bully Ruffian. All of this reminds me of the classic story of the man who was watching the fishing vessels come into port: after spelling out the names of several, he was stumped at Psyche; he remarked, "That's a blank strange way to spell fish."

SUPERSTITIONS ABOUT BIRDS

There are enough superstitions about birds right here in Kentucky to fill a good-sized pamphlet. Some of these we share with English and Scotch-Irish people everywhere, but some of them are peculiarly our own. Nearly everybody shivers at the whining, spooky call of the screech owl, or, as Huey Long might call it, the "soroooh" owl. It portends death, sickness, bad luck generally. To run it away, burn an old shoe. (I must confess that I would not blame the screech owl for fleeing from such an odor.) The other owls, being less common, are not regarded so superstitiously, but they are liked by few people. When the first whip-poor-will calls in the spring, you may obtain your wish if you will at once lie down, wherever you are and turn over three times, making your wish as you do so. Some people fear this call, though, when it is uttered from the ridgepole of the house. Of course, a rainorow's call portends rain, quite as accurately as does the croak of the treefrog. Blue jays are not to be seen on Friday mornings between nine o'clock and noon; they have gone to carry kindling wood to Satan. A kingbird (bee martin), in spite of all the investigations made by the United States Bureau of Biological Survey, is still regarded as a devourer of bees. I have had several fairly well-educated people ask me if it were really true that swallows and chimney swifts hibernate in the mud at the bottom of ponds and rivers. When I have explained how impossible it would be for warm-blooded, lung-breathing animals to do this, they have looked incredulous, being unable to see any difference between birds and reptiles in this particular. Cardinals are good birds with which to try your fortune: When you see a male cardinal sitting in a tree, begin saying the alphabet; it will fly on the initial of your true-love's name. One of the strangest superstitions I have ever met is the one that regards green herons (shitepokes) as originating from bullfrogs. The superstition that has injured the hawks more than we can ever

know is to the effect that all hawks are evil. The deprodations of the Cooper's (blue-tailed) and the red-tailed have made nearly everybody hate the whole race. I can recall having heard a few people defend the marsh (rabbit) hawk for its catching field mice and other enemies of the crops. One of the queerest beliefs I know is the one that credits the hawks with ability to imitate people in calling "Chickee," and thus luring the young and unsuspecting fowls out into the open, where they will become an easy mark. A necklace made of the shells of bird eggs, particularly of catbird eggs, is supposed to bring good luck. I recall with what pride an elderly woman told me that her best beau gave her for a present a string of such shells, some twenty or thirty in number. I was too much disgusted to make any comment. Many innocent superstitions attach to what the birds say, such as the meadowlark's "Laziness will kill you." The first one who thought this was probably supposed to be hoeing corn but was really leaning rather heavily on the hoe handle. Sometimes very enthusiastic people rush into my office or call me by telephone to tell me that spring is here, because they have just seen a robin or a bluebird. It seems almost cruel to remind them that both species are permanent residents and are quite as obvious in January as in April, if one were really looking for them. Superstitions about birds range from cruel ones that cause people to take the lives of innocent or helpful birds to mere laughable ones that attribute strange powers to common species.

SUPERSTITIONS ABOUT ANIMALS

Nearly every animal is a sign of good or bad luck. One of my graduate students, Mr. E. E. Fentress, of the Caneyville High School, in his master's thesis on "The Superstitions of Grayson County," found still alive dozens of superstitions that deal with animals, particularly cats. Undoubtedly the black cat might be regarded as the very symbol of bad luck. If one crosses your path, you will meet disappointment or accident or other calamity. To avoid this calamity, spit over your little finger toward the black cat, or turn around three times, or repeat some hocus-pocus rhyme. Killing a cat is regarded as even worse than killing a person, for the Law can prosecute you for the latter but not for the former. I recall how far my eyes bugged out when I was a small child and heard a little hillbilly tell how "Bubbah" killed a cat and was horribly scratched by the "hant" that very night. If any of you have had the unpleasant task of killing a cat, you will readily see why the animal is reputed to have nine lives. The tenacity of life manifested, even by the proverbial "sore-eyed kitten," makes one wonder whether there might not be a secret source of life where the bullet or ax or stove-wood stick cannot enter. Hair-raising stories are told of how cats seek out corpses and devour them and how cats also suck away the breath of sleeping persons. Black or gray or any other color, the cat holds terror for many people who are otherwise as bold as a lion.

The dog, on the contrary, is an animal of good luck, though his baying the moon is regarded as spooky by most people. He shares with many other animals the ability to detect witches or other supernatural characters. I have heard many a person, who probably did not know that people had ever regarded dogs in this light, declare that a person that a dog dislikes is not to be trusted. It is considered bad luck to sell a young dog or kill an old one. Be particular, also, about stepping over your dog while he is still a puppy; this will prevent his growing to maturity. Probably the greatest superstition about dogs is that of believing them

endowed with all human characteristics except speech. I used to argue with some dog-owners; long ago I have ceased to do so, for nearly everybody thinks his dog the exception to any rule about dog-psychology.

Superstitions attach to nearly every animal. If a rabbit crosses your path while you are on your way fishing, you had better turn back, for you will have no luck. You had also better leave your dog at home when you wish to catch fish. It is bad luck to pass a load or drove of hogs on the highway. Twin calves born of a heifer bring a death in the family. The sight of a gray or white horse betokens bad luck for you. A terrapin in your garden will bring you good luck. To kill a toad will insure your cow's giving bloody milk. To prevent your dog from running away, pull three hairs from his tail and put them under the doorstep. For good luck catch a snail on the first day of May and throw it over your shoulder. Every time you kill a spider, you kill an enemy. Avoid killing a lady bug, since it is a lucky object. Similarly, do not kill a daddy-long-legs; doing so will prevent your cows from coming home. Be sure to drape the bee-hives in black when there is a death in the family and leave the black up until after the funeral; otherwise the bees will leave. These are just a few of the hundreds of superstitions that attach to cats, dogs, and other animals.

SUPERSTITIONS ABOUT LOVE

All of us have tried at Hallowe'en to determine the future, but many of the people in our state try charms at other times of the year. The business of finding one's mate is serious enough for us to be forever seeking. At any season the apple peeling when thrown over the head will form the first letter of your true-love's name. Similarly, the apple seeds properly counted will reveal whether she loves you or loves you not. At Christmas write under each spine on a holly leaf the name of one of your admirers and place this leaf under your pillow; you will dream about the one who will love you best. If you will remove the yolk from a hard-boiled egg, fill the place with salt, and eat the egg, salt and all, you will dream that night that your true love will bring you a drink of water; do not be so eager to get the water that you fail to recognize who brings it. The cardinal, or ordinary redbird, can tell your fortune quite as well as Madam Sanscharactere. When you see one sitting on a limb, begin saying the alphabet; it will fly when your own true-love's initial is called. Besides, it will fly in the direction in which he lives.

Try the following to avoid being an ungathered rose on your ancestral tree. Do not allow any one to sweep under your feet. If you find yourself fond of cats, break this habit, for it portends old maidenhood. Do not fail to take all of a piece of cake offered you; if you are so dainty that you take only the top layer, you are destined to be single. You young women must avoid soaking, or dunking, your bread or cake in coffee; the penalty is single blessedness. Do not allow your dish water to come to the boiling point; otherwise you will be out of the matrimonial market for a year.

Lovers' quarrels and jealousies must be avoided at all costs. If you are doubtful about your lover's fidelity, tie a knot in a cedar limb; if the limb continues to grow, his love is sincere. If the fire you have built burns well, your lover is thinking about you. When you are fishing, name your bait; if you catch a

fish with this bait, your lover is true. If you are slightly doubtful about your lover's affection, steal a hair from his head and bury it with one from your own; this will insure lifelong affection between you two. A love-vine, or dodder, placed by you on a plant will grow if your lover is true. Bend a stalk of mullein in the direction of your sweetheart's home; if the stalk regains its upright position, your lover is true.

Assuming that you have done all these and more, I suppose that you are now ready to contemplate matrimony. Watch your step, literally, when you march in to face the preacher; do not stand across the flooring planks from him. Watch the colors worn by brides if you wish to prophesy safely the happiness or sorrow of the match: blue-true, brown-town, etc. Avoid marrying on a stormy day, since that portends a stormy married life. If the wedding ring is dropped during the ceremony, look for bad luck. And after the ceremony, when the bride steps across the threshold of her new home, tell her to be sure to step across rather than on the threshold if she wishes to be happily married. If you are not one of the happy pair and wish to be especially lucky, kiss the bride before the husband has a chance. And, naturally, catch the bride's bouquet if you wish to be the next to go to the marriage altar.

SOME FOLK REMEDIES

Whether it is "rheumatiz" or hives or shingles or night sweats, the plain, common people have plenty of remedies for common diseases in Kentucky. A buckeye or a potato carried in the pocket or a ring made of a horseshoe nail worn on the finger will prevent rheumatism. A tub of water set under the bed is about of equal merit with sage tea as a panacea for night sweats. The good old assafoetida bag worn around the neck, and incidentally gnawed on while you are bored with too much time, will keep away germs of disease--and people. A woman who lived in a good house in a college town seriously prescribed earthworm oil for my friend's rheumatism. Mr. Fentress, to whom I am indebted for many of the superstitions listed in this column, found 32 folk remedies for rheumatism in Grayson County alone. But he found nearly three times as many sure cures for warts and moles, from wiping a stolen dishrag on the offending wart or mole and burying it in an ash-hopper to having some charmer say a spell over the defect. If freckles interfere with you socially, bathe your face in the water collected in a stump, an oak stump preferably. If you are bitten by a snake, rub grease on the bite and have a dog lick off the grease. Of course, you could get a mad-stone in most neighborhoods. When colds bother you, tie a sow bug in a bit of cloth and wear it around your neck. A tooth worn in the same way will keep down toothache. Of course, it is well known that a person born after the death of his father has powers over throat diseases of very small children, by blowing his breath into the mouth of the unsuspecting infant. If you suffer from asthma, have some one clip a lock of your hair and insert it into an auger hole bored into a tree just at the exact level of the top of your head. For ague tie nine kinds of weeds into a bundle and hang it in the chimney where it will not be disturbed. Medical men do not believe in specific remedies any more thoroughly after long years of experimentation than do the folk in such remedies as the ones I have enumerated.

And that reminds me that some of the readers of this column should have a dose of spring bitters. For fear that some of you do not know one of the approved methods of concocting this necessary adjunct of spring, I shall give a recipe of tried merit. First get a big, large-necked bottle and put into the bottom a layer of rock candy. Stand on end a goodly amount of the following: burdock roots, washed and sliced lengthwise; sarsaparilla roots; wild cherry bark; sassafras bark. Pour over this herbarium some corn liquor, and after the mixture has had time to ripen, take a big swallow or a tablespoonful each morning, or oftener if you feel the need of it. This will thin down your blood after the winter's cold. It will give you an appetite for wild greens and spring "fixin's."

Probably you need another prescription for chills and "agers." This one is a sure cure (or kill). To a pint of whiskey add an ounce of quinine and two tablespoonfuls of oil of black pepper. Take as much of this as you can bear without saying too many bad words. The ague germs will turn and flee without imitating Lot's wife.

And do not forget sulphur and molasses, that good old spring remedy for what ails you.

PASSING INSTITUTIONS

DRESSES, BREECHES, AND PANTS

PART I

There was a time when the various stages in a boy's growth were obvious, when even the uninitiated could know where the boy had arrived in the serious business of growing up. The years between birth and grown-up life were divided, like Caesar's Gaul, into three distinct parts. Each age was guarded by traditions, which usually took the form of a senior court composed of the older boys. Since so many of my contemporaries were born after the boundaries of these three ages had disappeared or had become less obvious, I feel it a sort of religious duty to instruct the ignorant ones, born an age too late.

All children, then as now, wore dresses when they were babies, but dresses persisted long after the time of more babyhood. Boys four and five years old wore dresses, sometimes boy dresses, but often the same short dresses worn by girls. If any one doubts my word, I can show him a little kilted skirt and coat to match that I wore in the winter and spring after I was four years old. I can remember now how I looked in the old mahogany mirror when I was dressed up for Sunday School, after the usual weekly scrubbing of neck and ears. Often another custom was kept up, as a sort of badge of small boyhood; I refer to the habit of allowing the boy in dresses to wear his hair long. I have seen boys in school in dresses and with their hair done up in plaits, but ordinarily dresses and long hair were laid aside as symbols of the child's becoming large enough for school. On the other hand, I have seen boys in dresses chewing tobacco, real "hillside" tobacco, which is used in other parts of the world to spray on insects. But to most of the community a boy was still a child and could be called "it" so long as he wore dresses. The real boy began with the donning of bodies and breeches.

Again I find myself not understood. All good writers of learned articles stop early in the game and explain terms, and so must I. "Bodies," then, were

waists to which breeches were buttoned, waists on which were sewed large white buttons and which were decorated with sailor collars with lace or other adornment. Every boy who had graduated from dresses felt proud of himself when he donned bodies and breeches; the same boy long groaned under the tyranny of these same bodies and breeches, for it was a time-honored custom for the big boys, who had reached the third and last stage of boyhood, to make fun of them. There are several types of crooked noses and an equal number of causes for their crookedness. One cause not always mentioned is that the owner of the nose made caustic remarks about bodies, with their buttons and sailor collars.

During the latter part of the boy's subjection to bodies and breeches there was a period of ill adjustment between the boy and his clothes. Cottonnade in summer and jeans in winter had a way of shrinking, almost in proportion to the growth of the boy. Consequently, one could tell at a glance whether the breeches were new or old. If they reached halfway down to the ankles, they were new; if they came to the knees, they were in their second summer; if they were several inches above the knees and, in the lingo of the time, looked as if they had been out in time of high water, they were some three years old and were about to be passed on to the next member of the family or to become carpet rags, that last refuge of clothes both good and bad.

PASSING INSTITUTIONS

DRESSES, BREECHES, AND PANTS

PART II

The Romans made a big to-do over a boy's becoming a man, but the boy himself probably got no bigger kick out of the experience than did the boys of my generation when they "put on" long pants, galluses, and shirts. Age-old custom had decreed, with the finality of a Mrs. Post, that long trousers or pants were to become a part of the boy's life along about the time he lost all power of calling hogs on any musical scale except the Chinese. Other indications of the approaching end of an era were the boy's efforts to black the toes and heels of his shoes without showing partiality to the toes; efforts to shave, in secret, with Father's Wade and Butcher razor, often with disastrous and even bloody results; efforts to summon courage enough to ask Father for the old family buggy and the old family nag some Sunday afternoon to "buggy-ride" the girls. The long-coveted shirt, pants, and galluses rather crowned the other signs that Nature was mutely giving, that boyhood in its earlier stages was passing away. The detested bodies and breeches were laid away; henceforth the lad was to be a man, capable of lifting under a handstick, of doing a man's share of work in the field, of setting tobacco instead of merely dropping plants for others to set. It was not always so pleasant an experience as one had anticipated. For instance, if the senior court, otherwise the big boys, felt that you were not big enough to be dressed like a man, then you had to prove your manhood by beating up two or three of your own size or a little larger. But that was not bad in comparison with having to wear bodies and breeches a whole season beyond the gosling age. I doubt whether I can ever again have the contempt for a person that I felt for a boy friend of mine who wore breeches until he was all of sixteen. The very idea of a boy with a settled voice, even with permission to drive his father's buggy, walking around in decent company in the garb of a little fellow! Even yet I feel a sort of cold creep come over me, a feeling of profound pity for such a boy.

But now it is all changed. Boys no longer mark distinctive periods of their lives by acquiring new types of clothing. I have seen mere infants, not old enough in the old-day code to wear breeches, strutting around in longies. And knickers, that oddity that cannot be classified as pants or breeches, knows no age limit: little fellows wear them, usually with one leg longer than the other or both legs nearly reaching the shoes;young bucks try to look chic and sporty in them; and even old men, with a too-bulging waist line, blossom out in golf knickers and make blots on the green, big, roundish blots with tapering supports. It is a degenerate age: just when we had got ourselves thoroughly encased in long trousers, here comes along a style that destroys all distinction and keeps us from knowing a fellow by his dress. Ability to call hogs has nothing to do with clothing now, no more than does blacking one's shoe heels. It is all too democratic, too leveling; not like the old times, when all the Gaul of boyhood was divided into three parts.

PASSING INSTITUTIONS

UP ON THE JOIST

Recently I ran across the word joist, or, rather, jice, and then a whole train of memories started. I was back as a boy in a log house, where space was at a premium, and where many an object was put up on the joist, away from the reach of the smaller children. There was the whetstone, worn into a mere cup by many an hour of sharpening pocket knives or butcher knives, just before the annual hog-killing. The tobacco knives were there, awaiting the brief but busy season when they would be called into use to harvest the one money crop of the farm. Keys and other valuables were there, forming a sort of cache of the family treasures. The front porch also had its joist, where bulkier things were kept and where the wrens built right among them. I just cannot help wondering where modern people keep their valuables. A safety-deposit box at the bank may be a better place to keep the very valuable things, but there is needed in every house a hidden storage space like the old joist.

The joist shared its ability to hold things with the Seth Thomas clock, which stood on the mantelpiece just above the big fireplace. The contents of the clock were also things to be kept out of reach of the children; the clock became, then, a sort of tabooed place. Small children would have sooner invaded the front room itself. Here the morphine or other poisonous medicine was kept, along with the key to the clock and even things like Grandma's false teeth. Hair-raising stories often scared us away from the clock, such as the one about old Mrs. Dunn, who lost her mind and committed suicide by purloining the morphine kept in the clock. When Father took out the key to wind the clock, I was almost afraid some visible or invisible thing would fly out and disturb the peace of the family. How big I felt when Mother asked me to wind the clock one night when Father was away on his duties as a country doctor until after bedtime. I stood up in a chair and made the old rusty wheels fairly spin in my eagerness to get the ordeal over with before my fine

nerve oozed away.

And where is the little trunk where we used to keep the clothes and relics of the sacred dead? And where is the old ketch-all? It is doubtful whether Noah's ark contained such a collection as ours held. Twenty years after I had worn the little boy dress mentioned in another article of this series I was on a visit to my old home when I suddenly remembered this relic of my childhood. I walked straight to the closet in which the ketch-all had remained all these years and drew at once from its hiding place the very little dress I wanted. Patterns of dresses of several decades ago, scraps left from those same dresses, remnants of children's belts and ties, small shoes that some of us had worn in our youthful days, all were there, reposing in that capacious old ketch-all. Dynasties might change in Europe, presidential campaigns might follow one another in America, but the ketch-all had kept alive for the future the stamp and image of the past, making it as real as contemporary history.

The joist has gone, along with the ketch-all and the Seth Thomas clock, but in other ways my contemporaries and I are keeping, on the back-closet shelf or in the baby books or elsewhere, other records of our ways and days. Palaces vanish, but human nature changes slowly, even though most of my younger friends do not know the significance of a joist.

Tidbits of Kentucky Folklore Series, W. K. T. C. Article # 27

Dr. Gordon Wilson

PASSING INSTITUTIONS

THE HOME-KNIT YARN STOCKING

PART I

Some generations hence it may seem as strange to Bible readers to read about sheep as to hear of oxen hitched to a plow, but to us who have worn home-knit yarn stockings and have watched their development from the time the wool left the sheep's back, there will always be a romance about sheep quite as real as the Oriental poets themselves have felt. Many an upland field not good for cultivation formerly had its flock of sheep, browsing among the sassafras and persimmon bushes and sounding their appealing voices over field and woods. Practically unnoticed through the summer, they became the especial care of the younger children through the winter. Regardless of the calendar or later frosts, the day the sheep were sheared in the spring was the signal for the boys and girls to "pull off barefooted." Any boy would gladly hold a sheep's head while a man cut off the fleece, particularly if one's feet could feel a freedom not previously experienced in many months of hard winter. If sheep could stand the bleak late-spring days, so could boys and girls. And the boy had a distinct advantage over the sheep, for in a few days of going barefooted he acquired a toughened skin on his feet that could resist any ordinary frost. The Prisoner of Chillon could not have felt any greater freedom when released than did a boy's feet after their long confinement in brogans.

After the shearing came another interesting event, the washing of the wool. Father, Mother, and all the children were called into service, and when the day was over, all the sheds were covered as if with a very-much-

belated fall of snow. While most of the dirt was removed by this washing, the burrs and coarser particles of dirt remained. Thus it was necessary to have a wool-picking. This occasioned often a number of neighborly gatherings. Great art was shown in removing the worst burrs without resorting to the use of scissors. A big split basket in the corner received the cleaned wool; the same basket held the wool when it was taken to the carding mills and made into light, fluffy rolls. Farther back the rolls were made at home. I myself have made a few rolls with cotton cards, largely for the experience, though I had the satisfaction of seeing Mother spin these rolls along with those from the mills.

By the time the wool had been cleaned and made into rolls it was the season for Mother to start spinning. Early in the fall the spinning wheel was brought out from the shed or the attic, and, as the evening passed away, the subdued, musical sound of the wheel filled the house, lending a picturesque setting for the stories I read or the dreams I projected. Outside in the murky sky I sometimes heard passing a flock of wild geese; the music of the wheel and the stirring call of the birds of passage have so associated themselves in my memory that the one brings up the other. Though I hear each fall the same wild geese, it seems, passing over my house, I miss the whirr of the spinning wheel and the odor of fresh new rolls of wool.

PASSING INSTITUTIONS

THE HOME-KNIT YARN STOCKING

PART II

Hank is not a dignified term in our day, but to me it suggests the hank of yarn thread I so often held while Mother wound the thread into large, soft balls. I was doing this very thing once when my big sister was reading aloud the passage in Longfellow's "The Courtship of Miles Standish" which tells how John Alden held the hank of yarn for Priscilla, "the beautiful maiden." And so wild geese and the glow of early autumn fires and "The Courtship of Miles Standish" and the sound of the spinning wheel are all mixed up in my memories, quite too tangled for me to separate or wish to separate.

Nearer and nearer comes the process of the actual making of the stockings. On some evening by the fireside Mother brought out her knitting needles and set to work. Faster than sight itself her fingers clicked the needles, the stocking growing visibly in a single evening. Even if she nodded, the knitting went on, we always maintained, and it is certain that she could knit without looking at her work. It was a great event when she reached the heel and doubled the thread. Up until that time the prospect for a stocking seemed very slender; now the completed article was almost in sight. A few more evenings, and the pair were complete, in form but not in color, for dye must be allowed its share in the stocking which was to have so great a history. By the time a new pair had been knit for each member of the family Christmas was near, the season created especially for the home-knit stocking. Just a few days before Christmas Mother dyed the whole output of her fall and winter knitting and redyed the stockings that had had to be supplied with new feet. Initiation for the new stockings was then at hand.

The snake has long had an undeserved reputation for his powers of distention; that honor should go to the home-knit yarn stocking. On Christmas morning my new

pair would have more contents than would have comfortably filled a gallon bucket. In another way they resembled snakes, for there were startling knots scattered along the stockings, revealing the presence of an apple or an orange, fruits little seen except at Christmas. The smaller spaces were snugly full of candy, raisins, figs, nuts, and with the inevitable bale of firecrackers and a Roman candle sticking out at the top. Bulkier objects were laid in the chair on which the stockings were hung. Fortuna's horn may have been good enough for the over-aesthetic Greeks; I prefer as a symbol of plenty the Christmas stocking, and since the home-knit variety has the greatest powers of distention, then that one as the modern representative of abundance. For the greater part of Christmas morning I delved into those stockings, finding new treasures as I proceeded. I literally ate my way through. Occasionally I encountered days afterward a lump of something which proved on investigation to be a remnant of raisins or figs, overlooked in my early-morning search.

PASSING INSTITUTIONS

THE HOME-KNIT YARN STOCKING

PART III

During Christmas week or later, whenever there was a snow, the new stockings were needed, even being reenforced by an old pair pulled on over the shoes and used for leggings. This was the regulation outfit for rabbit-hunting. Yarn stockings have a way of keeping the feet fairly warm, in spite of their being wet. Even "during books" in the subscription school which was often held after the holidays a fellow needed the warmth of wool stockings, for the two stoves, "with half a cord o' wood in," made little impression on the arctic temperature of our old nondescript schoolhouse. We welcomed a chance to get out into the snow to drag up saplings for wood, for by that means we kept our blood circulating and avoided the necessity of studying or of sitting quietly. What with rabbit-hunting, going to school, and doing the necessary chores about the farm, we soon needed repairs for our stockings. After supper, that busy time for Mother, the darning gourd was inserted into the worn stocking and the worn-out place mended. This repairing process had to be resorted to a number of times during the winter. By the second winter the foot was often too much worn to be darned; this necessitated a new foot. The old pair with the new feet was again subjected to dyeing, but even then the tops had a much darker color, revealing that they were second-season stockings. I recall how disappointed I was once when Mother was unable to get my new stockings dyed in time for me to hang them up, and I had to use a pair that had been redyed. Santa Claus seemed to know no difference between the new and the old, for his apples, oranges, figs, raisins, and nuts came true to form, and the Roman candles and firecrackers looked fully as good as at any other time.

After the days of the stocking as a useful object of apparel were over, it still had a history. It could be worn over the shoes in snowy weather, as I have already indicated, and in this capacity it often served through a long snow.

But there was one use which was supposed to be the end of old stockings quite as appropriate as the end of old battle ships is said to be: from the worn toe we made the core of a ball and supplied the ball proper by unravelling the rest of the stocking and winding the thread until a good-sized ball was the result. Along toward the completion of the ball we threaded the yarn through a darning needle and sewed the ball thoroughly, so it could stand rough treatment. We had never seen a baseball, and seldom a rubber ball. For all our games of ball--cat ball, bat ball, town ball, shinny, "antny over," hat ball--we used the home-grown product. I tell you, nothing hurts quite so much as a yarn ball soaked in water before nailing some fellow to the cross in the game of hat ball. This was the name we applied to one of our ceremonies in this game. When we played "antny over," the ball regularly got lodged on the roof of the schoolhouse, which required a vast amount of climbing the bell-post to dislodge it. Like the deacon's masterpiece, the yarn ball does not wear out easily. Usually we threw it away too far and were never able to rediscover it.

The yarn stocking, particularly the home-knit yarn stocking, like the yarn ball, has got lost, never to be found again. A brief impulse to knitting was given by the World War, but it died down, just like many of the fine impulses of the same war. Machinery can do the work much more rapidly, but with little or no sentiment attached to its achievements. Mother deservedly turns her attention to other things, but I miss the music of the spinning wheel; I miss the feel of the hank of yarn in my hands; I miss the yarn ball that I once regarded as the finest toy; but I miss most of all the sight of the new pair of stockings bulging with treasures greater than all the wealth of the Orient.

FRIDAY AFTERNOONS

Friday afternoons in the old-fashioned school had been dedicated from time immemorial to what would now be called "extra-curricular" activities. Speaking pieces was the greatest feature. Practice on our pieces was usually private, though an occasional teacher would drill us on our voice and gestures. Even the tiniest girls and boys could speak. Little-girl classics included:

"Here I stand on two little chips.
Come and kiss my sweet little lips."

and

"Here I stand, all ragged and dirty;
If you don't come and kiss me, I'll run like a turkey."

Little boys spoke pieces even more time-honored:

"I had a little mule; his name was Jack;
I put him in the stable, and he crawled through a crack."

or

"I had a little dog; his name was Rover;
And when he died, he died all over."

Still larger children could say pieces from the school readers, such as "Little Gustava," and "Harry and the Guide-post," and "The Chickadee." Occasionally two grown boys would give that tragic dialogue in which one man tells gently how the second fellow has lost all his property and all his relatives. I believe it bore some such title as "Breaking the News Gently." It was an even greater event when one of us spoke a piece that nobody had ever heard before. No such fame can ever again come to any of the boys and girls of our school as I acquired when I gave first a piece in Negro dialect about a colored brother who stole some breeches to be baptized in.

Spelling-matches were next to speaking pieces, and sometimes even exceeded this in popularity. First we used the Blue-backed Speller; but, for the most part, we spelled from McGuffey's Spelling Book. Two boys usually "choosed up," knowing well who spelled best and running a race in choosing to get the most of the good

ones on a single side. The poor spellers were often left until the very end, when they were taken so patronizingly that tears often resulted, especially if these slighted ones were large, overgrown girls with childish minds. Sometimes the last two chosen spelled against each other, and so on back to head. Sometimes the whole side spelled against the other one, each person going down as he missed a word. It was great sport to be left as the only one on a side, provided you knew you could spell down the four or five remaining opponents. I am glad that this fine sport is being revived in our time. Our children can thus know a few of the real joys of the old one-roomed country school.

Friday afternoons brought several other things, sometimes. We might have a ciphering-match, when the familiar old slate did valiant service and often got broken. We sometimes had a sentence-match, really a fine drill on word order. And sometimes, but very rarely, there was a treat, discussed elsewhere in this column. Friday afternoons still come, but they rarely bring the speaking of pieces. Pieces have gone out of style along with dinner buckets and slates and bed-ticking book-satchels. How great it would be to attend a genuine Friday-afternoon speaking of pieces and hear once more the whole array of oratory from "I had a little pig" through "Mary had a little lamb" to the heights of Friday-afternoon achievement, "Curfew Shall not Ring Tonight"!

FOURTH SUNDAY IN MAY AT MT. ZION

As a sample of interesting folk customs in every part of the state I want to tell you today about the homecoming celebration of the Negroes at Mt. Zion, a church in the Tennessee River hills some fifteen miles east of Murray. When "Marse Peter" Rowlett found he had more slaves than he could furnish work for, he established, in 1848, at his plantation a tobacco factory. After the war freed his slaves, none of them thought of leaving. Likewise the other ex-slaves of the neighborhood flocked to the factory to seek employment. In my boyhood "Marse Peter" died, and "Marse Jeffy" (Jefferson Davis, of course) succeeded to the ownership of the factory. He soon decided that his factory was too far inland and moved it shortly afterward to Murray, the county seat. By degrees most of the Negroes followed, and Mt. Zion, where they had worshiped for generations, was practically depopulated. Long before the factory was moved, there had been a custom of having a great spring meeting on the fourth Sunday in May. This custom has been continued to the present day.

Before the days of the automobile it was nearly impossible to get a carriage of any description in Murray on this particular Sunday; they had long been spoken for by the returning pilgrims. The few remaining Negroes in the old neighborhood slaughtered chickens, pigs, sheep, and goats in preparation for the the big day. New clothes were purchased and old ones washed and mended. You could tell by the tunefulness of the hired hands that they were anticipating great things on the fourth Sunday. I am told that it is still hard to find any car for rent on this particular Sunday, many of them having been spoken for months in advance.

"Bright and early," in a well-known phrase, on the fourth Sunday in May the procession started down the "big road": pedestrians, buggies, horseback riders, surries, "double rigs" from the livery stable, and farm wagons with spring seats

and cane or split-bottomed chairs, with hay and quilts in the back for the smaller members of the family. Of course, it is all motorized now, but with as many kinds of cars as there were formerly kinds of other vehicles. To give the occasion thorough respect and safety, some officer of the law was invited to be present, and he was always treated to the best of the fried chicken or barbecued lamb and other dainties. All day long the preaching went on, with a brief time out at noon for the dinner on the ground. And then the long line of vehicles, dust-covered and often rather shabby, filed back along the country road after the big day.

For a week or more after this event we heard various sidelights, if that is not mixing figures a bit too much, of the occasion. The hired hands imitated the various preachers or sneeringly told how some sister was dressed in much too worldly a fashion or made herself too obvious when she marched down the aisle to deposit her offering. Some of the less religious hands would shout like Sister Luoy or pray like Brother Blanton, much to the delight of us children, who were forbidden on pain of a dose of peach-tree tea to go near the Negro church on this day.

How often since I left the old community have I thought of the faithfulness of these black neighbors of ours to the "homecoming," which, in its way, represented all that we now mean by that term in colleges, and more. The older ones had grown up in slavery and had found in their church a way out. From the hard work of the newground and the tobacco patch they had come to the little old church to feel what can never be described or made plain to any one not gifted with the Negro's imagination. This is only one of hundreds of interesting folk customs that are found in every part of the state.

FOLK BY-WORDS

Some years ago I collected a host of common by-words, not real cuss-words but modifications of them. It is an interesting fact that in all languages words that start as violent oaths soon lose some of their intensity and finally become as harmless as "Good gracious." It is equally apparent that what sounds like profanity in one language would, if translated into another, seem perfectly harmless. Even slang words on opposite sides of the Atlantic assume entirely different meanings: "bloody" in England is a bad word, a rather harmless one in America, as when some one screams "bloody murder." A young woman of my acquaintance greatly shocked her pastor, an Englishman, by declaring that the baby of the family where she stayed was yelling "bloody murder" at all times of the night.

A queer thing I found when I looked over my list of funny by-words was that some of them are peculiar to certain people or certain neighborhoods. One old fellow used to say "By Dal" on all occasions. I have not yet figured out where he got this expression. Most by-words, when traced to their origins, are modifications of expressions involving the words "God" and "Jesus," however mild the expressions may sound today. A survey of my list shows varying degrees of feeling, from the stongest oaths to mere punctuation of phrases by nothing stronger than "Ah." To avoid the word "damn" and its associations many people are forced to manufacture queer-sounding expressions: "condemn," formerly heard as a vile oath, has degenerated into "consarn" or even "ton son." Probably "dad burn" and "dad blame" show about how far a vile oath can go down hill. "I gannies" and "I golly" have a flavor all their own, especially when given in the musical voice of some one who still keeps some of the tone of speech as it was in the days of the earliest settlement of Kentucky.

No writing system can represent the "words of miration" the Negroes used in my old neighborhood. Practically every statement made by a white person was met

with such replies as "M-m-m-uh," or "Is that so, Miss Malindy?" or "Well, I do declare." Speech for most of us has become rather business-like and staid;it is still a living thing in the mouths of primitive people of either race. It takes on musical significance and would have to be written on some sort of scale if it were actually transcribed. The intensives, or by-words, especially are subject to this "musical pitch," as it is called officially.

The by-words of children are a study in themselves. Many of them are quite unconscious ejaculations and often hit the center of things quite as well as time-honored grown-up words. Others are manifestly efforts to say earth-shaking things without arousing parental or other grown-up wrath. If I were an artist, I think I could draw typical children for such expressions as "Golly" and "O Gee" and "Good Granny." It is obvious to any student of language that there has been felt in all times and places a need for more expressive words than are to be found in the dictionary. Most people feel a little restraint when they use real cuss-words, but it is a rare person indeed who does not purposely or accidentally interject into his sentences some meaningless but intensifying word or words. The more these smack of local conditions, the funnier they are to the student of language.

FOLK SIMILES

Some ten years ago Mr. Anthony Woodson, who conducted a column in the Courier-Journal called "Just among Home Folks," asked people all over the state to send him lists of Kentucky similes and offered a prize for the largest list. Miss Myra Sanders, formerly of Shepherdsville, the corresponding secretary of the Kentucky Folk-Lore Society, won the prize, a large box of candy. Both Mr. Woodson and Miss Sanders agreed that the subject had been only introduced, that there are still dozens of equally engaging similes in daily use among our people. For fear that your figurative language may be losing picturesqueness, I shall list some of the similes that have delighted me in my life in various parts of Kentucky:

Color: red as a beet, yellow as a pumpkin, green as grass, brown as a berry, black as your hat, pale as a sheet.

Taste: sour as a pickle, sweet as molasses, puckery as a persimmon.

Intelligence: sharp enough to stick in the ground and green enough to grow, smart as a whip, wise as an owl, sly as a fox, peart as a cricket, sharp as a hawk's eye.

Social standing: common as branch water, poor as Job's turkey, poor as a church mouse, rich as cream.

Size: large as a washing of soap, big as a yellow dog, big as all out-of-doors, big as a minute, big as a barn door.

Personal characteristics: honest as the day is long, pretty as a speckled puppy, ugly as home-made sin, dull as a frow, ugly as a mud fence, weak as a kitten, game as a bantam rooster, tough as whang leather, freckled as a turkey egg, plump as a partridge, greedy as a hog, cross as two sticks, slow as molasses in winter.

Temperature: cold as a cucumber, warm as toast, hot as a fox, cold as kraut, cold as a dog's nose, hot as the hinges of Hades.

Sounds: loud as a pig under a gate, hoarse as a crow, noisy as a litter of pigs, still as a mouse.

Feeling: slick as a peeled onion, soft as dough, limber as a dishrag, sharp as a

tack, hard as nails.

Time: quicker than you can say Jack Robinson, slow as a snail, as long again as half, as far as two whoops and a holler.

Shape: crooked as a dog's hind leg, flat as a flitter, thin as a wafer, crooked as a snake, straight as a string.

Insanity: crazy as a loon, buggy as potato vines, crazy as a bedbug.

Hunger: hungry as a she-wolf, hungry as a bear.

Industry: busy as a puddle duck catching wiggletails, busy as a bird dog, busy as a hound with fleas, busy as a squirrel in a cage.

Miscellaneous: plain as an old shoe, dressed up like a sore thumb, dead as a door nail, blue as an old maid at a wedding, snug as a bug in a rug, thick as the hair on a dog's back, independent as a hog on ice, fine as frog hair, drunk as a biled owl, sweating like a nigger going to an election, tight as Dick's hatband.

Surely any one could find analogies around him quite as effective as these traditional ones. I am sure every neighborhood has its own preferences, figures that express for the people what no amount of correct and formal speech can do. For example, if one is a pretty as a speckled puppy, she is distinctively, not conventionally, pretty. Similarly, if a man is as stubborn as a mule, enough has been said to juftify a whole character sketch. And when a woman gets as mad as a wet hen, few of us stop to quibble about language. But you will probably think me as crazy as a bedbug or dry as a sermon if I do not stop.

THE TRUNDLE BED

I have seen canopy beds, and tester beds, and four-posters, and iron beds, and many another kind, but the trundle bed beats them all. Architecturally it is not equal to most of the others, but it, like many of the things we love, is not famous for its size or splendor. Before the days of plenty of room it held a proud place in the household. But since a room for each person is the thing, the trundle bed has been taken down and removed to the lumber room or the attic, along with a lot of cast-off clothing and other things too sacred to be burned.

Some of you may not know what a trundle bed is, or, rather, was. I am more than pleased to tell you. Scarcity of room in the old-fashioned house made it imperative to have beds that could be easily removed during the day. The older beds were high, very much higher than our present ones. This was a condition just right to call forth a trundle bed, a low bed that could be pushed, or trundled, under the big bed. The earlier ones were made by hand, of course, by the local wood-turner or blacksmith. The trundle bed was the sleeping place, ex officio, of the smaller boys or girls, so they could be right at their mother during the night. Childhood knew in the old days two promotions: first, from the cradle to the trundle bed, occurring at no certain age but dependent largely on the need for the cradle for a younger brother or sister; and, secondly, from the trundle bed to a "big bed," also occurring at no special time but sometimes dependent on the ability of the family to buy enough beds to supply its needs. It was supposedly the proper thing to promote the boy from the trundle bed when he began to get a trifle too long for it, but scarcity of beds often necessitated the keeping of the tall boy on the trundle bed, even though he had to curl up like a cat.

It was on the trundle bed that my brother and I were sleeping when we tried so hard to stay awake and see Santa Claus. At that time I was greatly disappointed at not being able to stay awake. I am glad now that nature's demands for

slumber were stronger than natural curiosity. It was from the trundle bed that I got up early on Christmas morning and went to inspect my stockings and to begin to eat my way down its treasures. It was the trundle bed that received us again at the end of this great annual feast day, after we had devoured all our candy and raisins and oranges and apples and had fired off all our firecrackers and Roman candles. The trundle bed was the scene of our frightful nightmares induced by too much birthday cake or too many cakes of smoked sausage. Even now I sometimes find myself calling in the midst of a nightmare for Mother, just as I used to do when I had eaten more than usual. It was the trundle bed, too, that made a good place to take a summer afternoon nap, by pushing the little bed so that a bit of it was exposed over behind the big bed. Every phase of boyhood slumber, summer and winter and spring and fall, is associated with the trundle bed, when we were still too small to feel ashamed at having to be so near Mother when everything was dark and still.

It was with reluctance that we gave up trundle-bed days, even if we were glad to be big boys. After the last boy was too long for the little bed, the much-battered old thing was taken down lovingly and carried to the garret, where, in many a house today, it still reposes, lost in the whirl of busy life, but not forgotten by hosts of people who still hold reverently this reminder of their childhood.

FOLK INDUSTRIES

The purpose of this article is to call the attention of some bright young people to opportunities for reputation offered by a study of the folk industries of Kentucky. Mrs. W. A. Obenchain, better known as Eliza Calvert Hall, the creator of "Aunt Jane of Kentucky," did pioneer work in this field with her Handbook of Home-woven Coverlets, published in 1912. She collected much material on our native basketry, but I do not know what has become of it. Some one could do our study of contemporary civilization a great service by writing authoritatively about the baskets made around Bonnieville, in Hart County. This area, it is said on good authority, has been noted for its baskets since the very earliest pioneer days. The pieced quilt, with its great variety of patterns, is a thesis in itself. Miss Bousman, formerly of Berea College, is right now doing a doctor's thesis on the cloth-weaving practiced in our Kentucky mountains. Ten minutes in her presence is sufficient to convince the most self-satisfied that here is a subject that challenges. Rag carpets, with all the industries that made them possible, are equally as interesting as cloth-weaving. All of us know that the curing of country hams is an art that no packing house has yet mastered. The drying of fruit, the making of numerous varieties of jellies and jams and preserves, and the cooking of distinctive Kentucky dishes are all in danger of perishing as arts for want of an interested historian. In Calloway County, at a small village called Pottertown, there has existed a pottery for more than a century. Never trying to be fancy in their articles, the potters of the famous Russell family, so long identified with this old pottery, have turned out thousands of plain, useful articles: jugs, churns, jars, flower pots.

Another phase of the challenge I am issuing in this article is a literary one. Why not interpret in some definite literary form these folk industries as well as the numerous social customs I have mentioned as quaint and in danger of

being forgotten? No amount of mere directions can ever recreate for future generations such distinctive things as "putting in" a carpet, or making soft soap, or curing meats. Necessity may have been the mother of invention, but poetry soon came to help her. Those who helped in hog-killings, house-raisings, wood-choppings, and similar community activities knew that labor alone is a dead thing; the social connections and the atmosphere of the occasion were the big things. So many of our actual customs have been so ignorently handled by people who have come into the state for a few days and then written as if they knew all about us that most of us take with more than a grain of salt accounts of this or that way of doing things in the mountains, the Bluegrass, the Pennyroyal, or the Purchase. It is against such exploiters of our customs that I am particularly incensed, for it strikes me as wicked for those who merely want to spice up their works to picture inaccurately what we are and do. Much of what is called genuine Kentucky folk-lore is nothing but commercialized folk-customs picked up here and there in all parts of the world, and in published books, and palmed off on the unsuspecting public. If only some scholarly people would interpret real Kentucky folk-lore, it would not be long until the commercialized form would disappear.

NEGRO SPIRITUALS

PART I

Though much has been written in recent years about Negro spirituals, the Kentucky Negro has as yet attracted the attention of few folk-lorists or musicians. Professor Karl J. Holzknecht, now of New York University, collected many Negro songs in Louisville when he was teaching in the University of Louisville. Miss Mary Allan Grissom has published a delightful collection called THE NEGRO SINGS A NEW HEAVEN, discovered among the Negroes of Louisville and Columbia. In practically every part of the state there are equally rich resources of Negro songs, waiting the attention of those who know and care for these valuable contributions to folk-lore.

A phase of Negro music that has always been interesting to me is the "holler," or yodel. Since Swiss mountain music has become well-known everywhere, Negroes as well as whites know how to give these calls; but the distinctive "holler" is a thing entirely different. When I was a boy in the Jackson Purchase, every Negro had his individual holler. At almost any time of the day, particularly as we went to the field to work early in the morning, these inarticulate longings of primitive souls could be heard ringing across the fields. I early learned to express myself in this same fashion and could once imitate a dozen or so of the Negroes, for each one had a distinctive twist to his call. Nearly all the cries began far up the scale and, by two or three descents, came down to the bottom, with a great mixture of minors. I have heard several commercial exploiters of our folk fail as lamentably in trying to imitate these calls as to talk like an old-fashioned darky or to use "you-all" correctly.

Scholars have about agreed that the distinctive parts of Negro music owe their origin to the primitive chant of the savages of Africa. The characteristic Congo song has a leader who improvises stanzas or exclamations, while all the throng

join in on the refrain. A good illustration of this can be heard now where a crew of Negroes are working. On a steamboat, when the deck hands are pulling in a rope, one Negro will make some melodious call as an order, while all the rest answer together as they pull, inserting many a quaint phrase or turn of expression. The holler of the Negroes of my boyhood is a remnant of this primitive chant, still inarticulate, just as the so-called moaning at church. Practically all spirituals keep this elemental chant, a remnant of the half-barbaric life that Vachel Lindsay has tried to express in his The Congo.

Most of the Negro's music, of course, is merely a reworking of the music he heard in the early days of slavery, adapted to his own moods. Recent studies made by musicians of old songbooks used by the pioneers in Kentucky and the neighboring states show that all the Negro has added to some of his spirituals is the inimitable swing and harmony that the high-pitched voices of the whites seldom can acquire. In fact, I have myself heard in many a country church of the whites the songs that have since then been collected and published as Negro spirituals. When Mr. J. D. Rowlett, now of Murray, conducted his tobacco factory in the hills near Tennessee River, the Negroes, particularly the women, would sing at their work the very songs that we sang in our churches, but it would have taken a good musician to recognize in the rich Negro music the rather flat, bleak, rasping sounds we produced in our white churches. This factory became the show place, to which all visitors were taken, to see the Negroes at work and to hear them sing.

NEGRO SPIRITUALS

PART II

The droning chants of the primitive African still appear in many of our spirituals and are usually found in the communal part, the refrain. I know of no spiritual where this is more effective than in "Poor Mo'ner's Got a Home at Last," a combination of the ejaculations of primitive times, refrains, and a wordless hum or chant. Negroes are fond of humming and often resort to it when they do not know the words. This is quite common among the whites and was much more so in the days just after lining the hymns had gone out of style and a sufficient number of hymn books had not been acquired. Even when the words are perfectly known, the Negro often secures fine effects by having many hum while a few sing. The success some years ago of the Russian Symphonic Choir in America shows what can be done with humming.

Rhythm is the big thing in a spiritual. If there are not enough syllables for the melody, the Negro adds an "a," never troubling himself about its meaning. More than we would admit, we white people do the same thing. Nearly everybody says "a many a time" and "a many a man" and "a Sunday." All of these expressions have good ancestry, but the one who uses them is not aware of this. The rhythm of the Negro's songs differs from that of ours by being a rhythm of the whole body. A Negro does not have to beat time to keep up with rhythm of his song; his body does that for him.

Most Negro songs imply a leader, not necessarily out in plain view beating time. He adds the new stanzas or lines, while the throng sing the communal refrain. A good illustration of this is found in the most famous spiritual of all, "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." The leader sings, "I'm sometimes up, I'm sometimes down"; the refrain replies, "Coming for to carry me home"; and so on through the entire song, where every alternate phrase is sung by the leader, followed by a phrase sung by the crowd.

The innumerable spirituals divide themselves into several types. These are determined by the sentiment of the song, for the music differs very little in some of the songs of one kind from that of a wholly different kind. Many songs are joyful, based on the Negro's conception of what will bring satisfaction or happiness. The well-known "I Got-a Shoes," or "Shout All Over God's Heaven," presents the hope of heaven, where the deficiencies of the present will be supplied. Feet which have often gone bare or cold will have shoes. Among the Negroes of my boyhood shoes were the badge of the dressed-up, the owner of property. I knew a half-witted Negro man to walk ten miles to the great annual meeting at the colored church near my home, stopping at a brook just before he got there to put on the shoes he had lovingly "toted" in his hands the whole journey. Other songs show the Negro in the depths, such as "I Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray." Another type, and the number of kinds is endless, contains echoes of slavery. Two of the best known songs of this type are "Steal Away to Jesus" and "Go Down, Moses." The Negro early identified himself with the Hebrew children in Egypt. In "Go Down, Moses" we have the hope that a leader will come to "tell old Pharaoh to let my people go." When I was speaking to a group of Negro school children of Louisville a few years ago and then asked them to sing some spirituals for me, I caught anew the value of this song, which even the smallest children sang with a fervor that showed that they knew its significance. "Steal Away to Jesus" is said to have originated on a plantation where the Negroes stole away in the night to a church across the river to keep their master from preventing their coming together.

As I have already said, there is an abundance of untouched material on Negro spirituals right here in Kentucky, awaiting the collector. And our spirituals may prove to be as unusual as those discovered in such numbers in Mississippi by Professors Odum and Johnson, of the University of North Carolina, a few years ago.

PASSING INSTITUTIONS

MISCELLANEOUS

It would be hardly fair to you who have followed this column if I did not say that the passing institutions I have chronicled are only a few of the many that are rapidly going the way of all our hopes and dreams. I would like to tell of others, quite as interesting and quite as feelingly remembered as the old family nag, the home-knit yarn stocking, chips, and the rest, but the year is now up, and you need to read about some things that are not passing. But when we of this generation think of the many things that have changed within our lifetimes, we are reminded of Jacob at the court of Pharoah:

> "And Joseph brought Jacob and set him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, 'How old art thou?' And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, 'The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the years of my life been and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage."

We fathers and mothers of the present time feel rather kindly toward Jacob and his hundred and thirty years, though we have certainly not attained to such a ripe old age. We find ourselves in the predicament of being on more intimate terms with our great-grandparents than we are with our own children. We may sing to our babies the age-old lullabies that we learned in turn from our parents, but in few other ways are the new ones bound back to the days of the years of the pilgrimage of their fathers.

Customs that we have known and loved are going or gone. To name them would be like repeating at length a Homeric catalogue of heroes. In mediaeval times there was a popular phrase that appeared sometimes hundreds of times in a

single long poem on things long past: "Ubi sunt?" This means, of course, "Where are?" And then would follow the melancholy conclusion that these--David and Solomon and Pompey and Caesar and Abelard and Eloise--and we, too, would die and take our places with things that used to be. How many "Ubi sunts?" I might ask: Where are preaching all day and dinner on the ground, and singing schools, and moonlight parties, and subscription schools, and molasses-candy pullings, and house raisings? Where are McGuffey's readers, and the Blue-back Speller, and Ray's Third Part Arithmetic? And where are tidies, and jeans quilts, and cottonnade trousers, and home-woven coverlets? Where are the square dance, and play-parties, and the string band? Where are the blackgum toothbrush and its more aristocratic relative, the hickory-bark toothbrush, and box cradles, and ovens to cook bread and sweet potatoes before the fire? One feels like answering all these queries in the words of the once popular old song "Where Now Are the Hebrew Children? by replying "Gone to live with the angels."

The lion and lizard, in old Omar's words, may hold court where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep; the joist may be gone along with the old family nag and the family album, with the clock tinker and the old Seth Thomas; but, elsewhere, under more modern conditions, other Jamshyds are holding court, other joists or their successors are keeping the family's treasures. We laugh at the obsolete customs of our youth, but our children are getting ready for the same wholesome laugh at their habits. And down under the good-humored smile with which we greet the old-time things there is a tenderness that makes us feel kindly toward Jacob and his lengthy pilgrimage.